



U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney
Northern District of Texas

1100 Commerce St., 3rd Fl.
Dallas, Texas 75242-1699

Telephone (214)659-8600
Fax (214)767-2898

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
CONTACT: 214/659-8707
www.usdoj.gov/usao/txn

DALLAS, TEXAS
MARCH 26, 2004

**MOTHER AND 4-YEAR-OLD SON REUNITED AFTER DAD ARRESTED
IN BELIZE ON PARENTAL KIDNAPING CHARGES**

United States Attorney Jane J. Boyle announced today that David Lee Clenney was arrested yesterday in Belize and is being returned to the United States by Federal Bureau of Investigation agents on a federal parental kidnapping charge filed in the San Angelo Division of the Northern District of Texas. Clenney was living in Belize with his son whom he failed to return to the San Angelo, Texas, area in August 2003, after his scheduled visitation. Heather Clenney, Jacob (Jake) Lee Clenney's mother, flew to Belize yesterday to retrieve her four-year-old son and both mother and son are scheduled to arrive this evening at the San Angelo Regional Airport.

A federal complaint was also filed in February 2004 in the San Angelo Division of the Northern District of Texas charging Clenney with one count of unlawful flight to avoid prosecution. According to the affidavit filed with that complaint, Barbara Quinlan, of Oak Park Heights, Minnesota, who was visiting Belize in late January and early February 2004, became suspicious when she met Clenney and his son at the Coconuts Caribbean Hotel in San Pedro, Belize. Clenney introduced himself as "David," and his young son as "Jake." When Quinlan returned home, she checked the www.missingkids.com internet website and recognized the photos of David and Jacob Clenney as the father and son she had met in Belize. She provided a photo she had taken in Belize, which had David in the background, to the Runnels County Sheriff's Office.

Heather Clenney identified the man in the photo as her former husband. She gave Jacob to him on July 26, 2003, to begin his two-week visitation period as they had agreed upon while awaiting custody to be awarded. Until Clenney was located in Belize, Heather Clenney had not heard from David Clenney or her son since that date despite numerous and

exhaustive attempts. Heather Clenney was awarded custody of Jacob Clenney on September 18, 2003, and was appointed sole managing conservator with the right to establish Jacob's primary residence.

David Lee Clenney, formerly a resident of the Houston, Texas, area, will appear in federal court in San Angelo, Texas, on Monday, March 29, 2004, at 1:15 p.m. for his initial appearance on the federal charges. It is anticipated that the government will move to dismiss the criminal complaint at that time and proceed forward with the criminal indictment charging international parental kidnaping. If convicted on that charge, Clenney will face a maximum statutory term of imprisonment of three years and a \$250,000 fine.

Runnels County, Texas also has a state kidnaping charge pending against Clenney at this time.

U.S. Attorney Boyle praised the perseverance of Ms. Quinlan and noted, "Without her efforts, we don't know when this mother and child would have ever been reunited. She is a true hero."

U.S. Attorney Boyle also praised and thanked the cooperative efforts of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; the United States Department of State's Bureau of Diplomatic Security and Bureau of Consular Affairs; Department of Justice Office of International Affairs; and the Runnels County Sheriff's Office. Ms. Boyle also recognized the important role of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and their web site. The case against Clenney is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Denise Williams of the Lubbock, Texas, United States Attorney's Office.